GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3585
ANSWERED ON:17.04.2008
INDO IRAN GAS PIPELINE
Botcha Lakshmi Smt. Jhansi

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India did not attend three meetings scheduled in Islamabad and did not respond to an Iranian offer for holding a Trilateral meeting in Tehran;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether India is opposed to Pakistan's demand for a transit charge for gas; and

(d) the time by which the project will be functional?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS(SHRI DINSHA PATEL)

(a) & (b) Iran proposed to hold the Seventh Trilateral Meeting in Tehran during last week of September 2007. Subsequently, Iran proposed to hold a meeting of the Oil Ministers of Iran, Pakistan and India on February 12-13, 2008 at Tehran. However, Government decided that a bilateral meeting between India and Pakistan should precede the trilateral meeting, as bilateral issues, such as transportation tariff and transit fee, needed to be resolved first. Certain technical and commercial issues relating to the project were also required to be discussed with Pakistan. Therefore, India did not participate in the trilateral meeting in Tehran.

Regarding the bilateral meeting between India and Pakistan, it has been agreed to hold official level meeting between India and Pakistan on April 16-17, 2008 at Islamabad and, thereafter, a Ministerial-level meeting also at Islamabad on April 25, 2008.

(c): Pakistan is demanding transit fees for passage of natural gas through Pakistan territory. The issue will be discussed in the forthcoming bilateral meetings between India and Pakistan.

(d): Such multilateral projects involve protracted discussions, as all the aspects have to be carefully examined and deliberated upon to the satisfaction of the participating countries to protect each country's interests and to avoid any problems in the future in the successful operation of the project.